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 ARA/AND, ARA, EUR
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O R 052354Z FEB 92
 FM SECSTATE WASHDC
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 E.O. 12356: N/A
 TAGS: PREL PGOV VE OAS XK XL XM
 SUBJECT: OAS MISSION TO CARACAS IN SUPPORT OF DEMOCRACY
 REF: (A) 92 STATE 35210
 ROME ALSO FOR VATICAN, BRUSSELS ALSO FOR USEC, VIENNA ALSO FOR
 USDEL CSBM, USVIENNA FOR CFE

FROM U.S. MISSION TO THE OAS

1. AT THE FEBRUARY 5 REGULAR SESSION OF THE PERMANENT
 COUNCIL OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES (OAS),

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
 REVIEW AUTHORITY: NORMAN M BOUTON
 DATE/CASE ID: 21 JUL 2008 200503656

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COUNCIL CHAIRMAN BERNARDO PERICAS (BRAZIL) ANNOUNCED THE FEB. 6 DEPARTURE OF AN OAS MISSION TO CARACAS TO DELIVER PERSONALLY TO PRESIDENT PEREZ THE FEB. 4 OAS PERMCOUNCIL RESOLUTION CONDEMNING THE ATTEMPTED COUP IN VENEZUELA, BACKING THE PEREZ GOVERNMENT, AND REINFORCING THE HEMISPHERE'S COMMITMENT TO SUPPORT DEMOCRACY. PERICAS, OAS SEC GEN BAENA SOARES, AND VENEZUELAN PERMREP GROSCORS WILL FORM THE OAS MISSION, WHICH EXPECTS TO RETURN TO WASHINGTON FEB. 7.

2. VISITING COSTA RICAN FOREIGN MINISTER BERNDT NIEHAUS TOOK THE FLOOR TO OPEN THE PERMANENT COUNCIL SESSION. HE DENOUNCED THE ATTEMPTED COUP IN VENEZUELA, PRAISED OAS EFFORTS TO RESTORE CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRACY IN HAITI, AND CALLED FOR THE OAS TO PRESS HARDER IN DEFENSE OF REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY IN THE HEMISPHERE IN ORDER TO FULFILL THE COMMITMENT OF THE SANTIAGO DECLARATION APPROVED AT THE JUNE 1991 GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

3. "THE SPECTRE OF TANKS ON THE STEPS OF MIRAFLORES
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PALACE SHOULD MAKE MEMBERS LOOK AROUND THE CONTINENT," NIEHAUS SAID, "AND RECOMMIT THEMSELVES TO THE CONSOLIDATION OF DEMOCRACY IN THE HEMISPHERE." NIEHAUS URGED THAT THE OAS NOT LIMIT ITSELF TO RHETORICAL CONDEMNATIONS OF COUP ATTEMPTS, BUT DEVELOP A FUNCTIONAL MECHANISM TO DEFEND REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY AND THUS REINVIGORATE THE ORGANIZATION. HE NOTED POINTEDLY THAT COLLECTIVE SECURITY MECHANISMS BORN IN THE DECADE OF THE 1940'S (I.E., THE RIO TREATY) HAVE LITTLE RELEVANCE TO TODAY'S PROBLEMS OF DRUG TRAFFICKING, ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION, AND THE "NEW WAVE" OF COUP ATTEMPTS ("GOLPISMO").

4. IN A BRIEF BUT HEARTFELT RESPONSE, VENEZUELAN PERMREP GROSCORS THANKED NIEHAUS FOR HIS "EXTRAORDINARY EXPRESSION OF SOLIDARITY" WITH VENEZUELA, AND NOTED THAT HIS COUNTRY HAD LEARNED MUCH FROM COSTA RICA WHILE BUILDING DEMOCRACY IN VENEZUELA. GROSCORS ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE FIRST DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT IN THIS CENTURY WAS OVERTHROWN BY A MILITARY COUP IN 1948, THE YEAR THE OAS WAS FORMED. AT THAT TIME, THE VENEZUELAN SAID, THE OAS WAS FAR TOO WEAK TO TAKE ANY ACTION, UNLIKE THE SITUATION TODAY WHEN IT IS INDEED COMMITTED TO MEET AND TAKE ACTION IN SUPPORT OF

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REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY IN THE HEMISPHERE.

5. COMMENT: NIEHAUS' CALL FOR ACTION IN SUPPORT OF
DEMOCRACY AND TO REINVIGORATE THE OAS ECHOED SIMILAR
REMARKS BY ABOUT HALF OF THE SPEAKERS AT THE FEBRUARY 4
COUNCIL SESSION CALLED TO CONDEMN THE ATTEMPTED COUP
(REFTEL).

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6. PORT-AU-PRINCE MINIMIZE CONSIDERED.
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